

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION[571]

Notice of Intended Action

Twenty-five interested persons, a governmental subdivision, an agency or association of 25 or more persons may demand an oral presentation hereon as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)"b."

Notice is also given to the public that the Administrative Rules Review Committee may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this proposed action under section 17A.8(6) at a regular or special meeting where the public or interested persons may be heard.

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code subsection 455A.5(6), the Natural Resource Commission hereby gives Notice of Intended Action to amend Chapter 108, "Mink, Muskrat, Raccoon, Badger, Opossum, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Fox (Red and Gray), Beaver, Coyote, River Otter, Bobcat, Gray (Timber) Wolf and Spotted Skunk Seasons," Iowa Administrative Code.

Chapter 108 sets the season dates, bag limits, possession limits and areas open to hunting or trapping furbearers.

These amendments change the ending date for the unrestricted taking of muskrats from April 15 to April 1 and add natural resource biologists and county conservation board directors to the list of officials who may permit trappers to disturb muskrat houses on state or county game management areas. The amendment clarifies that persons displaying either bobcats or otters as taxidermy mounts must keep the CITES tag in their possession.

Any interested person may make written suggestions or comments on the proposed amendments on or before April 29, 2009. Written comments may be directed to the Wildlife Bureau's Web site at www.iowadnr.com or may be sent to the Wildlife Bureau Chief, Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034; fax (515)281-6794. Persons who wish to convey their views orally should contact the Wildlife Bureau at (515)281-5034 or at the Wildlife Bureau offices on the fourth floor of the Wallace State Office Building.

Also, there will be public hearings held at 18 locations via the Iowa Communications Network on April 29, 2009, from 6 to 9 p.m. Interested persons should contact the Department at (515)281-5034 for a list of hearing locations or go to the Department's Web site at www.iowadnr.com. At the hearings, persons may present their views either orally or in writing. Persons attending the hearings will be asked to give their names and addresses for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of the amendments.

Any persons who intend to attend a public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department of Natural Resources and advise of specific needs.

These amendments are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 481A.6, 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.87, and 481A.90.

The following amendments are proposed.

ITEM 1. Amend subrules 108.1(1) and 108.1(2) as follows:

108.1(1) *Molesting or disturbing muskrat houses.* Any department of natural resources officer, natural resource biologist, or county conservation board director may permit trappers to molest or disturb muskrat houses on specific state or county game management areas as provided in Iowa Code section 481A.90, after finding that muskrats are causing excessive damage by destroying the vegetation essential to the welfare of a marsh and after so posting the area.

108.1(2) *Game management areas.* Open season for taking muskrats on certain state game management areas, certain federal national wildlife refuges, and certain county conservation board areas, only where approved by the wildlife bureau and posted accordingly, shall be from 8 a.m. the day after the regular muskrat trapping season ends until April ~~15~~ 1. The use of leg-hold traps during this season is prohibited unless each trap is placed completely inside a muskrat house. No bag or possession limit.

ITEM 2. Amend subrule 108.7(6) as follows:

108.7(6) *Tagging requirements.* Every river otter or bobcat that may legally be kept must have a CITES tag attached. Tags will be supplied by the conservation officer or designated DNR employee. The tag must remain with the pelt until the pelt is sold or used for other purposes that render it no longer available for sale. Persons displaying river otters or bobcats as taxidermy mounts or as other decorative items must keep the tags in their possession as proof of legal harvest.